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## A FEW TESTIMONIALS.

### THE INDICATOR.

*"Library Construction, Architecture, Fittings, and Furniture."*

By F. J. BURGOYNE. 1897.

"The Cotgreave Indicator is that in use in the majority of the British Free Libraries."

*"The Free Library: Its History and Present Condition."* By J. J. OGLE. 1897.

"The Recording Indicator is almost certainly the invention of Mr. A. Cotgreave (Public Libraries, West Ham, London, E.) and is that most largely used."

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"All the London Free Public Libraries (except one or two which do not use indicators), have adopted the Cotgreave System, which has been found to work well."†

N.B.—See also "Greater London," by E. Walford, M.A., F.S.A. (page 360); "Methods of Social Reform," by Prof. W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., F.R.S., LL.D.; "Public Libraries," by T. Greenwood, F.R.G.S.; &c., &c.

\* As a matter of fact it will be found in about nine-tenths of the Libraries using indicators. Over 300 Institutions are now using it.

† Sixty-two Public Libraries in London and the Metropolitan area are using it.

### MAGAZINE RACKS.

"FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, WANDSWORTH.

The Cotgreave Magazine Rack has been in use in the news-room here since the opening of the Library. I can unhesitatingly speak of its value, for it greatly tends to keep the tables tidy. Being so compact it takes up little room, and a reader can see at a glance the periodical he wishes to read."

C. T. DAVIS, Secretary and Librarian."

\* The Cotgreave Racks are in use at some 50 Libraries and Literary Institutions, from which similar testimonials have been received.

### THE CONTENTS-SUBJECT INDEX,

TO GENERAL AND PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

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#### "DAILY NEWS."

"A 'Contents-Subject Index to General and Periodical Literature' would, if properly done, be a great time-saving machine. Such a work is being undertaken by Mr. A. Cotgreave. The first part, which is now before us, is distinctly promising. It will be helpful to many students and readers."

#### "DUBLIN REVIEW."

"The Editor of the 'DUBLIN REVIEW' (Canon Moyes), desires me to thank you for the specimen of the 'Contents-Subject Index,' and to say that he has formed a high opinion of it, in fact he has already found it useful."

T. W. HUNTER, Librarian, Archbishop's House, Westminster."

Similar expressions of opinion have been received from a large number of leading journals, and from many well known English and American Librarians.

N.B.—The Contents-Subject Index will be supplied to all Library Assistants at a reduced price if applied for before publication.

Full particulars of the above and also of other Library Aids sent upon application.





# The Library Assistant:

*The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.*

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No. 16.

APRIL, 1899.

Published Monthly

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## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895. FOURTH SESSION. YEAR 1898-9.

*Members are requested to carefully read the announcements appearing on this page, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements will be sent out.*

### APRIL MEETING.

The seventh meeting of the fourth session will be held at Battersea Public Library, Lavender Hill, S.W., on Wednesday, April 19th, at 8 p.m., when Mr. A. Denton (*Chelsea*) will read a paper on "Early Parochial Libraries, with especial reference to the first English Public Libraries' Act, and to the labours of Dr. Bray in the Seventeenth Century."

### MAY MEETING.

The eighth meeting of the fourth session will be held at Bishopsgate Institute, when Mr. P. W. Farmborough, F.Z.S., (*Edmonton*) will read a paper on "Scientific Literature."

### JUNE MEETING.

The ninth meeting of the fourth session will be addressed by Mr. L. S. Jast (*Croydon*) on "Reading."

### THE CONVERSAZIONE.

By the permission of the Governors, which has been kindly procured by Mr. W. B. Thorne, a *Conversazione* of the members and friends of the L.A.A. will be held at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, E.C., on Wednesday, 5th April. Tickets are issued with this journal to all London and Home Counties' members. Those who desire to be present to whom a ticket is not sent, and those others who desire a further ticket, should apply at once to the Hon. Secretary.

### PROPOSED VISIT TO STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

The suggested visit to Stratford-on-Avon on Whit-Monday, May 22nd, has proved very popular, and it is hoped to make up a good party of members and friends for the occasion. About twenty London members have sent in their names; the N.W. branch members propose to send a deputation, and it is hoped that many members who cannot get to any of the Association meetings will join this pleasant outing to the Mecca of students of Shakesperian literature.

## SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.

In accordance with Rule 7, clause (c), a requisition was made to summon a Special General Meeting to so alter Rule 6 that a provision may be made at the next Annual Meeting for the election of a fixed number of London members and of country members to the Committee. This meeting was held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, March 8th, at Cripplegate Institute, Golden Lane, E.C., and there was a good attendance of members. Mr. Ogle took the chair, and after the reading the requisition for the meeting, Mr. Dinelli, seconded by Mr. Soper, moved, "That as the membership of the L.A.A. now consists in almost equal proportions of country and London members, the rules be so altered as to give equal representation on the Committee to both, and that in Rule 6, clause a, after the word '*ten*,' be inserted the words '*London and ten country members*,' and that the Secretary be instructed to issue the ballot papers for the election of the Committee at the next annual meeting in accordance with such addition to the Rule." This was supported by Mr. Chambers, Mr. Denton, and other speakers, and by the Hon. Secretary, who stated that the increase of the non-London members had been very marked since the commencement of the work of the Association, and that while at the first Annual Report there were 7 non-London members out of a total of 54, and 9 out of a total of 74 at the second report, there were 29 out of a total of 101 at the third report, and now 62 out of a total of 135.

Mr. Hatcher, seconded by Mr. McDowgall, moved, "That at each annual meeting 15 per cent. each of London and country members be elected as a committee," claiming that the membership of the Committee should vary with the numerical strength of the Association. It was pointed out that as there were some 2,000 assistants in libraries eligible for membership this gave a possible committee of 600, and on being put to the meeting this amendment was negatived.

Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Wood, moved that the words "*three non-London*," be substituted for the words "*ten country*" in the original motion, as few or no country assistants could attend meetings of the committee. Mr. Denton opposed this amendment, claiming that country members would have a full agenda sent them, and that in all matters of importance their opinions could be received by letter. Some discussion ensued as to the use of the words "*country*," "*provincial*," and "*non-London*" in the motion, and Mr. Dinelli agreed to accept the last as a correction of the original motion.

Mr. Carter's amendment of "*three*" was then put and lost, and the original motion as amended was put and carried.

The Chairman then called on Mr. Ward to read a paper on "Prison Libraries; an hitherto undeveloped field of librarianship," which had been contributed by Mr. W. L. Selby (*Bristol*),

and is printed elsewhere. An interesting discussion ensued, after which Mr. W. J. Harris (*Cripplegate*) read a short paper descriptive of the system used in the Cripplegate Lending Library, to open a discussion on "Lending Library Systems." This paper proved most interesting, and was listened to attentively, while it provoked a very animated discussion, in which nearly all took part. The pros and cons of the various library systems were thoroughly gone into, and the general opinion of the meeting seemed that while the open access was well suited for libraries situated in business quarters, it was not adapted for libraries situated in suburban and residential quarters. The question of messengers, of the relative wear and tear of books, of misplacements, and of economy in working, were well discussed, and it was admitted generally that where many messengers came to the library there was some extra trouble to the staff in the "open" system, and that books wore out more rapidly by their much handling in its use, but that misplacements did not often occur, and were soon detected, and that there was some economy of working. The congestion in front of busy lending library counters in the evening was commented on, as was also the spreading of this crowding over a larger space in "open" libraries, and the practice of allowing non-fictional literature to be examined before its entry to a borrower in indicator libraries favourably remarked upon, as extending to the indicator system the advantages of the "open" system without its drawbacks.

On the motion of Mr. Dinelli, seconded by Mr. Bullen, a vote of thanks was accorded to Messrs. Selby and Harris for their interesting papers, and Mr. Harris suitably replied. On the motion of Mr. Clarke, seconded by Mr. Vellenowerth, a vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Ogle for presiding.

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#### L.A.A.—NORTH WESTERN BRANCH.

*Hon. Sec., P. D. GORDON, Mudies' Library Manchester.*

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#### APRIL MEETING.

The third meeting will be held in the Central Public Library, Oldham, on Thursday, 13th April, at 8.45 p.m., when it is hoped that the chief librarian, Mr. R. Bateman, will deliver an address. Members and all library assistants interested are requested to make a special effort to be present. Trains from Victoria Station at 7.45 p.m., returning at 10.12 p.m.

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#### MARCH MEETING.

The second meeting took place on the 8th of March, at the Manchester Athenæum, Mr. R. Irwin in the chair, and there was a good attendance. It was resolved, if possible, to form a library of technical books for the branch members, and to hold meetings alternately in Manchester and in the surrounding towns. It was

also decided to hold a special meeting of the branch during the Summer School. A committee of six was elected to conduct the business of the association. Messrs. A. Baker (Ashton-under-Lyne), Dickens (*M. Athenæum*), Haworth (*M. Reference*), Irwin (*M. Hulme*), E. McKnight (Carlisle), and Quarmby (Oldham) and Mr. Crampton (*M. Y.M.C.A.*), was elected treasurer.

The Chairman read a paper on "The Training of Assistants," [*published in the March "Library World"*] by Mr. J. H. Swann, which evoked some criticism of a favourable character, and the meeting dispersed with the usual thanks.

#### SPECIAL NOTICE TO ASSISTANTS IN THE N.W.

All members of the L.A.A. are cordially invited to attend any meetings most convenient to them.

Library assistants generally are invited to attend and to see for themselves the helpful character of the meetings. An evening is not wasted that is spent in hearing a paper or a discussion on matters affecting library work. If librarians find attendance at L.A. meetings useful, how much more useful will library assistants find the occasional meeting with others engaged in the same work, the same studies, as themselves? The advantages of organising and attending such meetings are many, and membership of the L.A.A. is of service to the most junior of assistants as to the senior. A half-crown annually for juniors, and a crown annually for seniors, carries with it the right to full membership, to attend all meetings, to take an active part in the administration of the Association, and to have a copy of this journal as published. Assistants who have held aloof from any professional organisation on the ground that such were London associations whose influence was far removed from their sphere of action, have now an opportunity to assist in founding a local self-governing organisation, which will elect its own officers, conduct its own business, manage its own finance, and will have space reserved for it in these columns for issuing notices and recording proceedings, while its members will have an equal right with their southern colleagues in all matters affecting library assistants generally. The following assistants in this district have joined the L.A.A.:—A. Baker, T. Green (*Ashton-under-Lyne*); C. R. Wright and C. W. Gabbatt (*Barrow*); W. T. Montgomery (*Bootle*); E. McKnight, T. Gray, H. G. Steele (*Carlisle*); H. E. Bennett (*Chester*); W. Cunningham (*Liverpool Athenæum*); J. D. Dickens (*Manchester Athenæum*); H. W. Kirk (*Chetham College*); P. D. Gordon, W. U. Tookey, and H. Galloway (*Mudies', Manchester*); H. Perceval (*Owen's College*); J. Hibbert Swann and W. B. Haworth (*Reference Library, Manchester*); E. Jones (*M. Gorton*); R. Irwin (*M. Hulme*); W. Crompton (*M. Y.M.C.A.*); E. Evans (*Northwich*); W. Quarmby, A. Clare, Miss A. Dyson, and T. R. Eastwood (*Oldham*); and J. McKnight (*Wigan*).



### NORTHERN SUMMER SCHOOL.

The Meetings will be held this year at the Manchester Public Library on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the 14th, 15th, and 16th June. Entrance fee 2s. 6d. Attendance will be strictly limited to those engaged in Library work. The Summer School Committee earnestly hope that all Librarians in the northern counties will draw the attention of their Assistants to this notice, and afford every facility for attending the Classes. The list of lectures will be ready next month, and may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, George T. Shaw, The Athenæum, Liverpool.

### THE L.A.A. AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The Technical Education Board for the County of London, in reply to the letter of the L.A.A., "have decided for the present to do nothing in the matter" of a grant in aid of classes in librarianship which are not confined wholly to those engaged in libraries. In face of the facts marshalled by the L.A.A., and of the statement of the L.A. in their application that the classes were not to be confined to actual practitioners, no other course was open to the Board, though it is for some reasons to be regretted that it could not go out of its way to offer a conditional grant, and thus to have seen if the L.A., in its adherence to a principle that guards the interests of students altogether non-existent this session, would have refused aid for genuine student-practitioners.

### WHAT IS A PROFESSION?

In the *Record* of last month Mr. J. J. Ogle objects to the use of the word "profession" in speaking of librarianship. He claims that word as descriptive of "Law, Medicine, and the Ministry of the Established Church," forgetful that Macaulay wrote of "five or six professions," and that the use of the word is now used generally for all the higher walks of life, and even degraded to be the antithesis of "amateur," in the newer language that a wave of athleticism has flooded us with.

It does not degrade a thing to call it by a higher title than it legally bears, and if the calling of things by higher titles will help to raise them in general estimation, let us continue to do so. Strictly speaking, a profession is after all but a public declaration of one's calling, and a worthy effort to live up to its highest possibilities, while not disregarding its lowest. Bacon saith, "I hold every man a debtor to his profession, from the which as men of course do seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavour themselves by way of amends to be a help and ornament thereunto." This breathes the true professional spirit, and surely the "minister of the mind" may claim some portion of it, as well as the "minister of the soul," "the minister of the body," and the "minister of property?"

But undoubtedly Mr. Ogle is right when he claims that the use of the word "profession" to cloak ignorance is unjustifiable, and that to use it as descriptive of one's calling pre-supposes a sound secondary education and a super-added intellectual and mechanical training.

X.

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#### A BASELESS FALSEHOOD.

In reference to a well-circulated rumour which has found expression in the columns of a contemporary usually careful in its statements and well informed in its facts, we have much pleasure in saying that we have received absolutely trustworthy information that the serious allegations made by rumour and by the journal in question against the late chief assistant and the library authority in question are untrue. The vacancy was not caused by the dismissal of the former officer, and his successor was selected with the utmost impartiality, the sole desire of the authority being to get the best man, the applications of the London candidates receiving the same attention and consideration as those from the provinces. It would be a useless and an invidious task to trace home to their origin the several and separate falsehoods, but we would ask all those who circulate such stories to remember how much harm and ill-feeling they may cause. Yet everything has its good use, and if this unpleasant episode teaches us to hesitate before consecrating idle rumours with the dignity of print it will have served a good purpose.

The gentleman whose conduct has been assailed in such an unseemly way has our deepest sympathy, and we convey to him and to his late chief our regret that "the lying jade rumour" should have made free with their reputations, and our pleasure that in these ephemeral columns we spared ourselves the indignity of circulating a baseless falsehood.

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#### THE SOCIETY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIANS.

At a meeting, held at Bishopsgate Institute, Mr. Frank Chennell (*Willesden*) read a paper on "Library Administration: a plea for greater elasticity." The reader urged abrogation of any suspicion of hide-bound officialism or red tape in the administration of libraries; and for the freer communion between readers and librarians. Mr. Chennell, amongst other important matters, drew attention to the necessity for removing the age limit in order that intelligent boys and girls might participate in the use of the library as soon as they are capable of taking due care of the books, even at the age of eight. The paper provoked an interesting discussion, and a vote of thanks was accorded to its reader.

## PRISON LIBRARIES; AN HITHERTO UNDEVELOPED FIELD OF ENGLISH LIBRARIANSHIP.

By W. L. SELBY.

Upon tabulating the diversified and sometimes extraordinary callings followed by the readers and users of a large public library, it would seem that the catholicity of the scheme embraced without exception all classes of our genus who are able to read. Even the "inmates" of our workhouses are not omitted from its minor benefits, and "boarders" from inebriate homes and private asylums have been known as regular borrowers.

Owing to circumstances over which he has no control, the convicted criminal does not figure in library statistics of readers, but confines himself to the gaol collection. Both at home and abroad there has been of late years a greatly increased attention paid to Prison Libraries, the largest of which exist in English convict prisons.

In some half-dozen American gaols there are newspapers edited, printed and published inside the prison buildings. The effects of the regular work, sustained interest and recreation thus afforded to the prisoners must certainly assist in evolving law-abiding citizens from (at least) the casual offenders, and England might with advantage take a lesson from her cousins in this attempt at solving an interesting penological problem.

The necessity of prison education is now being adequately discussed. William Tallack, Esq., the President of the Howard Association, in giving evidence recently before a Departmental Committee appointed by the Home Secretary, made the following suggestion:—"In all large prisons special librarians should be employed, thus relieving the schoolmasters and chaplains," and "less rigid rules are desirable as to the supply and loan of books. An intelligent discharged prisoner informed the Howard Association that when reading Alison's History he had been forbidden to borrow an atlas with it."

As an example of a typical English prison library reference may be made to the collection at Horfield Prison, Bristol, which was instituted over thirty years ago, and is open to all classes of persons "who reside within the building" at any hour of the day, with the exception of those set aside for work. The average expense per annum of maintaining the library is 1s. 3d. per head. As in most public libraries the borrower is allowed to retain a work for seven days, but he is not always permitted to select his own book, and there is no catalogue for the use of the prisoners.

Although the usual classes of books are represented in the library, Capt. H. L. Conor (who was the Governor of Horfield Gaol at the time these inquiries were made) says that fiction and bound magazines are mostly in request, the popular books at this prison being:—Sir Walter Scott's and Ballantyne's novels, the "Leisure Hour," the "Sunday at Home," the

"Quiver," and "Good Words." If the works of Dickens are contained in the library it is odd that his name does not take the first place in the list of favourites; the many expressions of sympathy toward the incarcerated occurring in his books would, it is thought, attract those suffering imprisonment in a greater measure than publications of a more religious character.

The scheme for appointing prison librarians opens up another area of labour for the trained librarian, and it is hoped that in the early future some worthy pioneer from the ranks of the Library Assistants' Association will come forward to co-operate with the President of the Howard Association in effecting reform in prison libraries, and establishing an efficient librarian in every large gaol in the empire.

*Note on the Discussion.*—In the discussion that followed the above paper, the influence of education upon crime statistics was dwelt upon. It was pointed out that while in 1869, 9·4 per 1,000 of the population had been or were criminals; in 1896 the percentage was only 2·4; and that in a population of 21½ millions there were upwards of 1,600 sentences of penal servitude and 34 death sentences, while twenty years later in a population of 30 millions there were only 800 sentences of penal servitude and 19 death sentences. Of the criminals to-day, 92 per cent. are illiterate, and many of them are persons who are confined to gaols for short periods, because they have not the means to pay small fines, and thus for lack of means have to suffer the heaviest penalty that the law contemplates: on account of their poverty. The case of prisoners confined "for conscience sake" was also gone into. The hope was expressed that librarians would send a delegate to look after the interests of prison libraries at the Prison Congress to be held at Brussels in 1900, and it was generally felt that in the extension of library work to all grades of society the prisons should not be overlooked, because the old idea of a prison as a place of punishment was being sunk in the new ideal of it as a place of reformation, and for building up of character.

#### COMMITTEEMEN AS PAID LECTURERS.

By B. L. DYER.

An anonymous correspondent has in two previous issues of this journal dealt with the balance-sheet of the Education Committee of the Library Association as passed at the annual meeting and has incidentally raised a question which involves a principle of admitted importance, whether members of a committee are entitled to vote themselves payment for work done as servants of a committee of which they act in two capacities—as executive officers and as members. A numerous correspondence has been addressed to me in the matter, much too large to print, which I propose briefly to deal with. The principle of such payments is admittedly contrary to the present high tone of public morality.

The right of an Editor to print anonymous letters dealing with any subject is unassailable, and the identity of "*Insider*" is of no moment. That he has cared rather to be a Junius than a Prynne, a Hone, or a Cobbett, does not affect the truth or the untruth of which he alleges and suggests. That he reflects what Mr. J. J. Ogle calls "an unteachable spirit" does not make his

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**MANUAL OF LIBRARY CLASSIFICATION & SHELF ARRANGEMENT.** By JAMES D. BROWN, Librarian, Clerkenwell Public Library, London. Crown 8vo., Cloth, 4s. net.

**ADJUSTABLE CLASSIFICATION FOR LIBRARIES.** By J. D. BROWN. Interleaved. 1s. 6d.

**MANUAL OF LIBRARY CATALOGUING AND INDEXING.** By J. HENRY QUINN, Librarian, Chelsea Public Libraries, London. Ready February, 1899.

**PUBLIC LIBRARY PRIMER.** By FRANKLIN T. BARRETT, Librarian of the Fulham Public Libraries.

CATALOGUES ON APPLICATION.

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letter pleasant, but it does not make it negligible. That he criticises past and gone history is true, but only on a study of past errors can one base future rectitude, and no opportunity was given for criticism before the balance-sheet was passed. That he criticises L.A. business and not L.A.A. business is true, but even assistants are rightly concerned in the honour of their profession. That the letters ought to have been sent to the L.A. Council and not printed, meant either that the Editorial Committee were to have broken the implicit confidence placed in them by their correspondent, or that on the unsupported testimony of an anonymous letter they were to seek rebuff.

Having dealt with the correspondence, I propose, for want of someone better qualified, to reply to the questions "*Insider*" asks.

Payments were made to two lecturers who were members of the Committee at the time of payment. But I am in a position to say that they were invited to become members after they had accepted appointments to lecture, and in no case did they vote payment to themselves. Nor was the payment made for reporting the inaugural meeting to a member of the committee, but to a reporter. The amounts paid to lecturers were in effect merely travelling expenses, and in no case did they represent an adequate fee. They might indeed have been well entered on the balance-sheet as "Travelling expenses of lecturers." The usual fee for reporting quite a small meeting is £2 2s., with extra for verbatim report per folio. Further questions as to the conduct of the affairs of the committee in deciding to employ a reporter, in fixing the inaugural meeting for a Friday, or accidents as to examination hall or lecture room are mere matters of controversy, and "the early days of any new system would furnish abundant illustration of hitches in detailed management, but criticism of such details should not be put forward to aid an attack on the honour of men who are doing what they can for others under very discouraging circumstances."

By a healthy criticism of the Education Committee, which is admittedly working against enormous odds, no harm can be done so long as it is remembered that the Education Committee practically consists of all the men in the profession who are both able and willing to lecture to students, and that it is in the unfortunate situation of having to employ its members in dual capacity, by reason that if they go off the Committee to lecture there will be a sad loss to the Committee, and that there are none others to lecture save them! But that this will continue I doubt—surely there must be many librarians who will not see the willing horses overladen—and that a few men shall be taxed in time and pocket to attend lectures and committees!

There is one thing further to be said, that however much is to be said for the Education Committee, and however much justification may be made out for their services in a good cause,

to my mind, the publication of the balance-sheet in its present form quite justified the questions of "*Insider*" No committee or public body but should avoid even the appearance of self-seeking, for if you "Wrest once the law to your own authority, To do a great right do a little wrong. . . ." 'Twill be recorded for a precedent : And many an error by the same example will rush into the state : it cannot be."

### THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' BOOK-SHELF.

The L.A.A. possesses an excellent little library, and most assistants work in libraries that have at least some books that are useful bibliographical tools. But library assistants will do well to own some of these valuable tools themselves, and in these days of cheap literature there are some books which not to have of one's own is to be indeed lacking.

Some time since in conversation with a librarian of world-wide eminence, the Editor heard a charming bit of autobiography, of how when an assistant in a library at the princely wage of £80 per annum, with a wife and child dependent upon him, that librarian had spared £3 per annum to subscribe to the London Library for books! £3 per annum expended wisely in the purchase of good bibliographical tools were well spent to-day, and from time to time the Editor will advise his readers as to especially valuable works to buy and place beside Mr. Greenwood's two handsome gifts on that particular book-shelf sacred to "books about books."

It is not always well to fight shy of remainders. Good books are not always popular books. Just now in Grant's (of Edinburgh) catalogue are two books every assistant ought to buy, and one that every assistant might well buy. An expenditure of one shilling and two pence will purchase Whishaw & Sargent's "*Guide Book to Books*"—a most useful book, and for two shillings you may have Edward Edwards's "*Town Libraries*," a pioneer and excellent work. "*Founders of the British Museum*," by the same author, is listed at 4s. 6d.—and better value for less than a crown it were hard to imagine.

When buying books, don't forget the admirable series of books that Mr. Fortune is publishing at the Library Supply Co. Mr. Brown's work on "Classification" will long remain the standard English book on this subject, and the interleaved edition of the new system, without the valuable historical introduction is very useful for notes. Mr. Quinn's book on "Cataloguing," "like good wine, needs no bush"—but assistants must not be content to let the library copies of these cheap and good books suffice them. Every assistant should do his best to encourage the spread of good principles of librarianship by purchasing the whole series, and creating a clientèle for which librarians will be glad to take the labour of publishing books. No assistant, when



this series is complete, no matter how small his library, or how small his salary, but will be able to glean something of the wide basis on which librarianship is founded—and lose that worship of cut and dried habit, that slavish following of grooves, and provincialism which exists to-day, and thus do his part in helping on the different trickling streams which once united will do so much to raise up librarianship in the popular estimation as one of the greatest educative professions of the age!

### NEW BOOKS, &c.

Account of the Safe-guarded Open Access System in Public Lending Libraries. Prepared and Circulated by the Librarians in charge of English Open Access Public Libraries. London, 1899. 12 pp., paper. (Two illustrations and table showing results of working.)

One can ill imagine Mr. Lister having discovered his new system of anti-septic treatment, and after communicating it, in the form of a paper, before the learned societies and in the medical journals, entering upon a campaign in the lay press upon its merits and demerits. It has been left to the homoeopath, the anti-vaccinator, the anti-vivisector, and the vegetarian to appeal in the lay press for support against the weight of medical opinion. Yet here we have a pamphlet signed by the twelve practitioners who introduce into the library world a system as contrary to accepted practice as is homoeopathy to allopathy, addressed not to the profession or craft of librarianship, but to the general public, and appealing against the indifference or the studied neglect of their colleagues—to a public that already holds quite a low enough view of the office of a librarian, and practically reflecting upon the business capacity of the huge majority of English librarians. The pamphlet is a piece of special pleading, addressed to an audience who may be held to know little or nothing of the merits or demerits of the system it advocates, and very little or nothing of the systems it condemns. But the English public is flattered by being, as it were, taken into the confidence of these twelve "librarians in charge," as much as it would be flattered as if twelve "doctors in charge" of hospitals lost sufficient of their professional dignity and *esprit de corps* to discuss with them the merits or demerits of a particular method of conducting the business of the institutions of which they are salaried experts. To claim for the advocates of one particular system of library management the monopoly of a desire "for the extension of public libraries and books by enhancing their educational value in a practical and satisfactory manner" is to be guilty at least of a *suggestio falsi*, and to describe another library method as "a kind of rate-aided lottery, which may serve well enough for the ordinary novel reader, but is a positive hindrance to the serious student," is a *suppressio veri*. Do the twelve practitioners not know that in libraries where borrowers are not admitted to the shelves that every facility is given for the selection of non-fictional literature? This being so, their whole argument as to the superior educational advantages of their system falls to the ground. The mistakes of readers and of cataloguers, caused by misleading titles, may form amusing reading for the lay mind, and it is easy to dismiss with this airy sentence, "access to properly classified libraries is an education in itself," all the difficulties of classification, and the never-twice-alike methods of classifying the same books; but these things do not convince students of library economy and experts in librarianship. The question needs a serious consideration. Careful and exact results, too, should be advanced in support of a new system, and not expressions like this, taken from an accompanying ready-made review. "The town libraries of Bournemouth, Brighouse, Clerkenwell, Croydon, Darwen,

to my mind, the publication of the balance-sheet in its present form quite justified the questions of "*Insider*" No committee or public body but should avoid even the appearance of self-seeking, for if you "Wrest once the law to your own authority, To do a great right do a little wrong. . . ." 'Twill be recorded for a precedent : And many an error by the same example will rush into the state : it cannot be."

### THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' BOOK-SHELF.

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Hornsey, Huddersfield, Kettering, Kingston, Rothwell, Widnes, and Worcester have adopted the system, in every case with excellent results." The pamphlet itself states that at Hornsey and Southport it is not yet in working order, while at Brighouse it has not had a twelve months' trial. Such phrasing is on a par with that used on p. 6: "At one of the larger libraries in the Metropolitan district the . . . system was adopted, . . . the effect . . . was that the borrowers from the two branch libraries continued under the old system, began . . . to unduly swell . . . the central." This library is not within the Metropolitan district except for police purposes, and is a borough outside the County of London, so that it is farcical to describe it as a "larger library in the Metropolitan district;" and since when have borrowers at branches ceased to swell the central lending counts, because of the greater selection of books there, rather than because of the system used?

To conclude this notice, we would ask the librarians who are interested in this new system, to adopt professional methods and first convince their fellow librarians, before they adopt the methods of the vendor of nostrums, and by means of wide appeal to the unlearned, rather than an exact experiment, build up a reputation for the new system.

B. L. D.

St. George-the-Martyr Public Library. Catalogue of the books in the lending and reference departments. 1899. 8 vo. pp. 207, xi.

This attempt at a classified catalogue shows apparently more courage than good judgment in its compilation and adoption: in such a district as St. George-the-Martyr is reputed to be, a dictionary catalogue would have been more useful. Mr. Brown's "Adjustable" system is that most evident although it is difficult to say upon what method of classification the library is founded. In fact, the Catalogue only can support the dignity, great or small, of the title of classified, the books being arranged according to size. The various sizes are represented by a letter of the alphabet. The different divisions, one can scarcely say classes in the usual acceptance of the term, are numbered consecutively, commencing in each division at 1. Had Mr. Brown's recommendation of the use of accession number as location or call number, been combined with this antiquated scheme of "sizing" the books, the result would have been better than it now is. It will always remain a question, in many cases, whether the number given by a borrower is that of the location or classification—C 8, to take a number at random, referring to "Diarists" is also the location number of Seeley's "Life of Christ." If appearances are to be relied upon, this will cause endless trouble, unless both numbers are given, in which case such numbers as this may appear "G 264, E 1219."

The great claim of the classified catalogue is the saving of space by reason of one entry only, all other information being given by means of the index or cross references; but here we have Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire" appearing under "Europe: History"; "Germany: History"; and "Italy: History"; references being given in the index under the author's name to all three entries of the same book. [Germany and Italy at that time constituted the Holy Roman Empire.] Perhaps instances such as this account for the size, which is certainly greater than would be expected of a classified catalogue of 6,000 odd volumes.

Perhaps the manner in which the attempt has been carried out is more legitimate ground for criticism, as after all a librarian has the right, if not always the opportunity, to follow his own views in arranging his library.

It is rather curious that in the "key," G 132, is "The cat," while G 134 is Dogs, surely cats are of varied kinds? Uniformity is the great thing to be sought after and the most difficult to obtain in a catalogue. Another trait is the use of the word "generally" instead of "general," to denote the scope of a class.

Several instances show that the books, or the entries, are not so carefully classified as they might have been—who does not know, however, that a book may be made to fit into almost any class?

Who would look upon "Royalty" as an adequate subject or class heading of biographies and histories of monarchs? Although English royalty is excluded from this, or is said to be, the first entry is Wright, T., "Caricature History of the Georges."

The difficulty experienced in compiling a classified catalogue which will in any way approach the ideal should deter all but those who find a definite demand among their borrowers, or those who have the money to spare to replace a possible failure of a first attempt, from indulging in the satisfaction of their own ideas.

A. J. P.

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#### "THE GLOBE" AND LIBRARY ASSISTANTS.

On Feb. 25th "the oldest evening paper" indulged itself in a leaderette commenting on the conduct of some Shepherd's Bush rowdies under the heading "Very Free Libraries." The most is made of an occasional disturbance in a library, such as may happen in any public building, and the article winds up with—

"The ratepayers have a right to demand that the institutions which add to their burdens should be so controlled as to reserve them strictly for their intended purposes. Unless that can be managed, these very free libraries cannot too quickly depart to the limbo appointed for played-out fads."

This sort of thing is as amusing as if one should claim that because a paper once lent itself to the publication of a confidential state document, one should clamour for its inhibition.

We notice the leaderette because it contains an admission that "library assistants have plenty of other work to attend to, nor are they, as a rule, physically fitted for dealing with gangs of rowdies in an effectual manner," and because of its suggestion "a stalwart porter." Does the *Globe* not know that porters are employed, and that also the police have power to act in public libraries under the Act of last year?

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#### "PEARSON'S WEEKLY" AND LIBRARY ASSISTANTS.

As one of a series of articles on "A Life's Work" on March 18th, appeared a description of "Free Library Staff Appointments," which is well worth reading. The whole trend of the article may be gauged by its first sentence, "Librarianship is a profession of the future;" while it prophesies in roseate manner that in ten years "the whole organization and propaganda generally will have been entirely reformed, and the mode of awarding the best appointments completely changed." It is encouraging in a popular paper to find librarianship recognised as worthy of being made a life's work, and a statement that appointments "should only be given to tried men who have spent their best days behind the library counter." May it lead to a better appreciation generally of a librarian's duties!

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#### NOTES AND NEWS.

DUNDEE.—An experiment is being tried of appointing various agents in various parts of the city to act as book distributors. Lists are left at the shops by the borrowers on returning a book, and the returned books and lists are collected.

by a messenger. The parcels of books are delivered by tramcar. A small collection of books is also on deposit with the agent, for borrowers that want a book without delay. The remuneration to the newsagent is but £1 1s. 0d. per annum, but it is understood that this is experimental. The advantages of the system are obvious for outlying districts, in relieving pressure at the libraries in the evenings, and in public convenience.

FULHAM.—The Vestry have applied for power to take over the libraries.

HYDE.—The new library was opened on the 18th February. An illustration of the building appeared in the "Building News" of February 28th, 1896.

LEEDS.—A new branch is being erected at Woodhouse Lane.

LIVERPOOL.—Mr. R. Meinertzhagen has presented a valuable collection of birds of the passerine kind.

ST. HELENS.—Mr. H. Binney has presented two water-colour drawings of local interest.

SHOREDITCH.—The London School Board has purchased the collection that had been bought as the nucleus of a museum.

PUTNEY.—The new library in Disraeli Road will be opened early in May by Lord Russell of Killowen.

WEST HAM.—It has been decided that it is illegal to take a poll on the "Freethinker" question, and it will, as before, be issued on application. The Council have decided to open on Sundays the Reading and Reference Rooms, but to close all day Bank Holidays. The Sunday staff are to have extra pay and a day off in the week.

#### APPOINTMENTS.

BUDDERY, Mr. E. E., senior assistant Yarmouth, to be a senior assistant West Ham.

MANCHEE, Mr. A. J., assistant Tate Library, Lambeth, to be an assistant Hampstead.

PEFLOW, Mr. W., senior assistant South Norwood branch of the Croydon Libraries, to be senior assistant Croydon Central.

NEW MEMBERS.—At the last Committee meeting were elected:—SENIORS: A. G. Burt (*Fulham*); A. J. Tumath (*Holborn*); W. Cunningham (*Liverpool, Athenæum*); J. Hibbert Swann and F. W. B. Haworth (*Manchester Reference*); W. Crompton (*M.Y.M.C.A.*); G. Jones (*M. Gorton*); H. Wensley Kirk (*M. Chetham Coll.*); H. Perceval (*M. Owen's Coll.*); and P. H. Wood (*Southwark, St. George Martyr*). JUNIORS: F. Gray and H. G. Steele (*Carlisle*); H. Benson (*Edmonton*); C. H. Simbrick (*Sion Coll.*); and H. J. Rix (*West Ham*).

#### NOTICES.

All communications as to the Library Assistants' Association, or as to this journal, should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. B. L. Dyer, Old Brompton Road, S.W.

All matter for the May number should be sent in on or before the 15th April.







# THE CARD CATALOGUE.



EVERY possessor of a library, no matter of how few volumes, recognises the desirability of keeping a proper record of it. This can only be done with perfect satisfaction by means of the card system, and the following are its chief advantages :—

- 1.—Strict alphabetical sequence can always be maintained.
- 2.—Books can be catalogued under author, title and subject, and arranged in the same index, cross references being made where necessary.
- 3.—When a volume is lent to a friend, a note to that effect can be entered on the card in a permanent or temporary way, and date of borrowing and return affixed.
- 4.—Any notes respecting date of accession ; where purchased or how otherwise obtained ; the owner's or his friend's opinions and comments on the book ; remarks as to re-binding, etc., etc., can all be recorded upon the card relating to the book in question, as the owner desires.

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10, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C

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**J. HENRY QUINN,**

*Chief Librarian and Clerk to the Commissioners.”*

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**Bookbinders and Booksellers,**

**KING'S ROAD, CHELSEA, LONDON.**

Printed by J. W. WAKEHAM, at 4, Bedford Terrace, and Published by H. L. DYER, for the Library Assistants' Association, at Old Brompton Road, London. S.W. February 1st, 1899.

